

## 6TH SESSION OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL PLATFORM AND 5TH HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: 22-25 NOVEMBER 2016

The 6th Session of the Africa Regional Platform and the 5th High-Level Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) took place in Balaclava, Mauritius, from 22-25 November 2016. The meeting was attended by representatives of 47 governments, as well as participants from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

The 6th Session of the Africa Regional Platform convened from 22-24 November and focused on enhancing understanding of disaster risk, improving disaster risk governance, increasing national and regional resilience, enhancing disaster preparedness and linking the Sendai Framework on DRR to Africa, through an African programme of work.

The 5th High-Level Meeting on DRR convened on 25 November, and adopted the outcomes of the Platform. Ministers and high-level representatives considered and agreed to the Programme of Action for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 in Africa, and the Mauritius Declaration on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa.

The Programme of Action includes specific targets on: increasing the number of countries with DRR in their education systems; increasing integration of DRR in regional and national sustainable development and climate adaptation frameworks; expanding the scope and number of sources for domestic financing in DRR; increasing the number of countries with risk-informed preparedness plans; and substantially increasing the number of regional networks for knowledge management and capacity development.

Following a brief introduction to the history of disaster risk reduction, this report provides an overview of the discussions during both meetings.

### BRIEF HISTORY OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Natural hazards, such as floods, droughts, earthquakes and tsunamis, are becoming more regular and intense, increasing impact on people and communities. Compounding the situation, poor planning, poverty and a range of other underlying factors create conditions of vulnerability that

result in insufficient capacity to cope with natural hazards and disasters. Action to reduce risk has grown in importance on the international agenda and is seen by many as essential to safeguard sustainable development efforts and achieve the SDGs.

DRR includes all the policies, strategies and measures that can make people, cities and countries more resilient to hazards, and reduce risk and vulnerability to disasters. Recognizing that natural hazards can threaten anyone unexpectedly, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system builds on partnerships and takes a global approach to disaster reduction, seeking to involve every individual and community in moving toward the goals of reducing the loss of lives, socio-economic setbacks and the environmental damages caused by natural hazards. The following highlights the development of the international DRR agenda.

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**FIRST WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER**

**REDUCTION:** This meeting convened in Yokohama, Japan in 1994 and saw the adoption of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and its Plan of Action. The Yokohama Strategy set guidelines for action on prevention, preparedness and mitigation of disaster risk. These guidelines were based on principles of risk assessment, disaster prevention and preparedness, the capacity to prevent, reduce and mitigate disasters, and early warning. The strategy also stated that the international community should share technology to prevent, reduce and mitigate disasters, while demonstrating a strong political determination in the field of disaster reduction.

**INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER**

**REDUCTION:** At its 54th session in 1999, the UNGA agreed to establish the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), and an Inter-Agency Secretariat and an Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) for the implementation of the ISDR (Resolutions 54/219 and 56/195, respectively). Among its mandated tasks, the IATF/DR was to convene *ad hoc* expert meetings on issues related to disaster reduction.

**SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER**

**REDUCTION:** The Second WCDR convened from 18-22 January 2005 in Kobe, Japan. The 168 states attending the conference adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA) and the Hyogo Declaration. UNGA Resolution 60/195 endorsed the HFA and committed governments to five priorities for action to: ensure that DRR is a national and local priority, with a strong institutional basis for implementation; identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning; use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels; reduce the underlying risk factors; and strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

**GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DRR:** In 2006, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs launched a consultative process to consider practical ways of strengthening the ISDR system to support governments in meeting their commitments to implement the HFA. It aimed to extend participation of governments and organizations, raise the profile of disaster reduction, and construct a more coherent international effort to support national disaster reduction activities. The Global Platform for DRR was formed as an expanded and reformed successor to the IATF/DR, envisaged to serve as the primary multi-stakeholder forum for all parties involved in DRR in order to raise awareness on DRR, share experience and guide the ISDR system.

The First Session of the Global Platform was held from 5-7 June 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland, and included a high-level dialogue on DRR challenges and opportunities, a series of workshops on DRR as a national priority and integrating DRR into sector agendas, and sessions on assessing and implementing the HFA.

At the Second Session of the Global Platform held from 16-19 June 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland, participants focused on increasing investment in DRR, reducing disaster risk in a changing climate and enabling community resilience through preventive action.

The Third Session of the Global Platform was held from 8-13 May 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland, and discussions focused mainly on reconstruction and recovery, the economics of DRR, and synergies with the international climate change and development agenda.

The Fourth Session of the Global Platform convened from 19-23 May 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland, and provided an opportunity to review the status of the HFA and encourage information sharing among decision makers, development partners, experts and practitioners.

**MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE HFA 2005-2015:** The Mid-term Review, released in March 2011, concluded that progress in DRR is occurring, especially institutionally in the passing of national legislation, establishment of early warning systems, and strengthening of disaster preparedness and response. It raised concerns about: the lack of systematic multi-hazard risk assessments and early warning systems, factoring in social and economic vulnerabilities; the poor integration of DRR into sustainable development policies and planning at national and international levels; and the insufficient level of implementation of the HFA at the local level.

**THIRD UN WORLD CONFERENCE ON DRR:** This meeting convened from 14-18 March 2015, in Sendai, Japan, and adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The Sendai Framework aims to achieve the following outcome over the next 15 years: substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries. This is intended to be done through four priorities of action (understanding disaster risk; strengthening disaster risk governance; investing in DRR; and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction), to achieve a set of seven global targets.

**REGIONAL PLATFORMS:** Regional inter-governmental organizations have increasingly taken responsibility to follow up on risk reduction activities, organizing a series of regional multi-stakeholder platforms for DRR.

In Africa, the Africa Regional Platform is a biennial forum bringing together member states, intergovernmental organizations and development partners. The Fourth High Level Meeting on DRR, met following the Seventh Session of the Africa Working Group on DRR from 21-22 July 2015, in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The meeting adopted the Yaoundé Declaration on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa, which calls on AU members and Regional Economic Communities to align their strategies, programmes and actions with the Sendai Framework, and for wide dissemination at regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national levels of the Sendai Framework, Africa Regional Strategy and Programme of Action on DRR.

## REPORT OF THE 6TH SESSION OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL PLATFORM

### OPENING CEREMONY

On Tuesday, 22 November, Khemraj Servansingh, Officer in Charge, National DRR and Management Center, Mauritius, welcomed delegates to the island, noting Mauritius is ranked 13th globally in terms of disaster risk. He said the country has moved from a “culture of response” to a culture of DRR through a national DRR act and a realignment of policies in line with the Sendai Framework. He said the three goals of the meeting are to: review progress of the Sendai Framework in Africa; discuss and agree an Africa programme of action in line with the Sendai Framework; and discuss and agree Africa’s position for the 5th Global Platform on DRR taking place in Mexico in 2017.

Jorge Cardoso, Southern Africa Development Corporation (SADC), emphasized the importance of DRR in the SADC region in light of the ongoing drought affecting 41 million people, leaving many in need of immediate food assistance. He underscored SADC’s commitment to DRR and said this meeting should enable sharing of good practices, and enhance coordination and mobilize commitments to DRR across the continent.

Robert Glasser, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for DRR, said the disaster-driven humanitarian emergency Africa faces is exacerbated by climate change. Action at the local level, he said, will be crucial, and both local and national DRR plans must be scaled up while ensuring complementarity. He applauded Africa’s work in shaping the Sendai Framework, particularly on resilient health infrastructure, and called for closer alignment of DRR and public health services. He recognized Africa’s population growth as an opportunity to get urban risk management right.

Olushola Olayide, Africa Union Commission (AUC), pointed to the ongoing drought as another reason that DRR in Africa cannot be neglected. She praised the 24 African countries that have ratified the Paris Agreement, and urged all delegations to develop bankable DRR projects to benefit from available financing.

Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheong, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management, Mauritius, underscored that the timely implementation of the Sendai Framework is key for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). He outlined Mauritius’ efforts to improve DRR including by establishing a national disaster center, and mainstreaming DRR at all levels of society. He underscored the need to align the African framework for action with the Sendai Framework, in order to signal clearly that DRR is a priority for Africa.

Wishing delegates fruitful collaboration, he declared the meeting open, and noted the regional economic community (REC) and stakeholder nominations for the drafting committee.

Amjad Abbashar, Regional Director, UNISDR Africa, summarized the status of DRR in Africa, noting Africa most frequently faces floods, epidemics and droughts. He said while countries continue to make progress on early warning and preparedness, and good work is being undertaken by RECs, remaining challenges include: lack of awareness; data limitations; and inadequate human and financial resources. Basabe outlined disaster risk drivers including: climate change; poorly planned urbanization; environmental degradation; poverty and inequality; and fragility and conflict.

Animesh Kumar, UNISDR, summarized the outcome document including a 16-page matrix on each priority for action, that is expected to be adopted on the final day of the meeting. He said the Platform provides delegates with an opportunity to situate Africa within the global context for the Sendai Framework.

### PLENARY SESSIONS

**UNDERSTANDING DISASTER RISK:** Robert Glasser moderated this Wednesday morning session, opening by noting that the scale of damage and loss is relatively unknown in financial terms, and is typically hugely underestimated. He called for: coherence across the 2030 Agenda; cross-sectoral cooperation; systems for sharing and evaluating multi-hazard evidence; evidence-based development planning; and standardized disaster loss databases in all countries.

Ailsa Holloway, Peri Peri U, pointed to the need for integrating different knowledge domains and the importance of new disaster risk and public health programmes at institutions of higher learning across Africa. She noted that disaster risk in Africa is “diverse and highly demanding” and called for the deliberate strengthening of capacity for managing and anticipating emerging risks.

Wadid Erian, League of Arab States (LAS), presented on droughts and communicating with policy makers, citing an example from Egypt in which national level bureaucrats worked with local communities to discuss disaster risk not only from the technical point of view but also from a practical standpoint. The fact that insurance companies do not provide drought policies, he said, underscores the difficulties of modeling drought risk.

Katie Peters, Overseas Development Institute, discussed the need for coherence across the 2030 Agenda including the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement. She said the



**Khemraj Servansingh**, Mauritius, presented the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 in Africa to the High-Level Meeting.

various frameworks are interdependent and have important commonalities, which should be seen as opportunities rather than as overlap.

Xavier Chavana, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Mozambique, discussed how DRR data has informed Mozambique's risk policy. He explained that a variety of risk information is used, including experiences from previous disasters, in order to enhance awareness amongst decision makers. He highlighted priorities including: relevant weather and hydrological information; building institutional capacity; creating an appropriate legal/policy framework; and identifying sectors most at risk.

The ensuing discussion centered on: tapping into the academic community to address DRR; lack of funding for DRR graduate students; integration of DRR into university curricula and sectors such as agriculture; mobilizing resources for DRR; and compilation and dissemination of best practices for DRR.

In response to the issue of funding, Holloway noted that the biggest obstacle to developing strategic human capital is the lack of resources for postgraduate research. On resource mobilization, Chavana emphasized the need for a sound DRR national finance strategy. Erian proposed a social vulnerability nexus to build resilience and for enhancing understanding of gaps in DRR. On best practices, Peters said the expert working groups under the international frameworks need to combine their efforts to ensure coherence.

Participants further highlighted: the importance of disaggregated data to facilitate effective and targeted policy-making; the need for legislation; and community engagement as a catalyst for addressing disasters. Panelists responded underscoring: the importance of enforcement of legislation; and the need to speak of coherence, but to be aware of "integration fatigue."

**STRENGTHENING DISASTER RISK GOVERNANCE TO MANAGE DISASTER RISK:** On Wednesday morning, Olushola Olayide, AUC, moderated the plenary session and said key objectives include: sharing lessons and good practices in disaster risk governance across Africa; developing recommendations to accelerate implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa; and identifying ways and means to enhance disaster risk governance.

Martin Owar, Uganda, said DRR is a component of development and should be included in economic growth agendas. He elaborated on Uganda's work enhancing DRR governance through: involving the prime minister; creating a ministerial level platform that meets monthly; using the Bureau of Statistics to provide standardized information for both economic planning and disaster risk governance; and creating a parliamentary DRR forum.

Jean Baptiste Havugimana, East African Community (EAC), drew attention to the proliferation of national DRR legislation but said that it is not harmonized across the continent. On the question of why disaster risk management legislation has not been prioritized in Africa, he suggested that DRR has traditionally been considered a humanitarian problem handled by humanitarian organizations.

Shahira Wahbi, League of Arab States (LAS), said that disaster risk governance cannot be effective without good information, appropriate indicators and a means to assess performance. With regards to DRR financing, she said, "there is political will but a lack of political skill." She underscored that advocates need to convince ministries that DRR is a priority by talking about it in terms of money saved via preparedness and risk management.

Majid Shangab, representing the Children and Youth, characterized youth as an underutilized resource, and underscored the need to bridge the gap between youth and policy makers through participatory governance. Shangab said youth are innovative by nature and eagerly uptake new technologies, noting their use of social media to assess disaster impact.

Patrick Kangwa, Zambia, expressed gratitude to SADC for supporting various Zambian DRR interventions and underscored the need for both horizontal and vertical structures for DRR. Kangwa highlighted that Zambia has a Permanent Secretary for DRR and that the Zambian DRR team is part of the climate and SDG planning processes through the office of the Vice President.

During the ensuing discussion, participants addressed: job opportunities for the youth in the DRR sector; harnessing emerging science to inform policy and practice; integrating parliamentarians in DRR governance; and the role of women in DRR governance.

**INVESTING IN DRR FOR RESILIENCE:** On Wednesday afternoon, Abdirahin Abdi, Insurance Regulatory Authority, Kenya, chaired the panel. He highlighted the need to promote mechanisms for disaster risk transfer in order to reduce financial impacts on governments and communities.

Julie Dana, World Bank Group, noted that the cost of risks has been severely underestimated and impacts on the poor are much more severe than thought. She emphasized that risk models are still hard to use, risk has to be priced and there is increasing convergence of risk and interdependency across sectors.

Erin Tressler, African Risk Capacity, highlighted three areas of work on: risk modeling; contingency planning; and risk transfer structures. She noted that investments in DRR and protective measures need to look at costs likely to be incurred should resilience investments be hit by a shock and emphasized that disaster risk financing is also about planning for what is going to happen in future and making informed choices on investments.

Luther Bois Anukur, IUCN, observed that the Sendai Framework offers a different lens for looking at DRR by promoting a multi-stakeholder approach as well as the role of ecosystems in DRR. He said: increasing investments in ecosystem management leads to improved outcomes on wellbeing, food, health and poverty reduction; and that green infrastructure investments are cheaper than grey infrastructure investments.

Bilal Anwar, Commonwealth Climate Finance Hub, observed that the science around climate change impacts is gaining credibility. She said there is a huge financial need for

both mitigation and adaptation, which financial institutions are working to address. Anwar explained that her institution helps countries access climate action financing and provides institutional and capacity development assistance.

Abdi highlighted the lack of insurance uptake in Africa due to lack of awareness and trust. Participants asked questions on: modeling drought risks and evaluating the cost of losses in order to establish insurance premiums; payments for ecosystem services; how insurance accounts for psychological shock; the difference between African Risk Capacity (ARC) and the World Bank's work on insurance; and the capacity of countries to manage their insurance systems.

Tressler said drought risk can be modeled by looking at historic rainfall patterns and applying that to an index of the effects of water deficits on crop yields. Dana said the World Bank is looking at developing complementary tools for insurance such as contingency funds and contingent loans and grants.

In the ensuing discussion, in response to questions from participants, panelists noted that in the developed countries, insurance products were built over hundreds of years. The development of a joint regional DRR climate adaptation plan and fund was also suggested.

**ENHANCING DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR EFFECTIVE RESPONSE, AND TO “BUILD BACK BETTER” IN RECOVERY, REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION:** This session convened on Thursday and was moderated by Jorge Cardoso, SADC, who opened by underscoring the need to strengthen preparedness for disaster response. He invited panelists to discuss: the current level of preparedness in Africa; good practices; ways to enhance preparedness; and effective ways to support the implementation of the Sendai Framework in the context of preparedness.

Aida Mengitsu, OCHA, described the difficult humanitarian situation in East Africa where people affected by disasters live in extreme poverty, often in fragile and insecure areas. She noted a shortfall in humanitarian financial assistance where only 40% of the need is met for East Africa. She called for: transcending the humanitarian-development divide and enhancing coordination; predictable and prioritized disaster risk management and response systems; clear accountability structures that are prioritized in official budgets; and reinforcing local structures and institutions as the “first line of response.”

Justus Kabyemera, ClimDev Africa Special Fund in the African Development Bank, described the work of the Special Fund to support regional and continental climate centers as well as its work in harmonizing national meteorological centers to exchange information.

Khemraj Servansingh, Mauritius, shared the Mauritian Government's disaster preparedness and response plans which includes: a DRR and management act that provides for a national DRR and disaster risk management council; a National Emergency Operation Command; training programmes for local leaders to become first responders; a national disaster simulation calendar; and an early warning emergency alert system. He underscored the importance of “self- help, mutual help, public

help” wherein individuals and communities are trained to help themselves in times of disaster as they wait for public help, which can take up to three days to arrive.

Prem Goolaup, Mauritius, outlined that the sea level is rising 10mm per year in Mauritius, and explained that the Government's objective is to build resilience of coastal communities. He described activities executed in partnership with UNDP including installation of rock armor at Grand Baie, planting of mangroves, and beach crest replenishment.

Youcef Ait-Chellouche, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), stressed that any DRR plan requires a corresponding standard operating procedure (SOP) that outlines the roles and responsibilities to operationalize the plan. He stressed the importance of insurance companies, noting that in developed countries these are an effective method for risk transfer, but are less prevalent in developing countries. Ait-Chellouche concluded by stating that the Federation is auxiliary to government and is intended to serve communities. He urged governments to use it.

The ensuing discussion addressed the involvement of stakeholders at all levels to tackle critical issues of DRR. The need for developing SOPs to trigger participation in specific stakeholders was also raised. One participant called for domesticating international DRR laws to facilitate the movement of goods and staff in order to respond effectively to specific hazards. The role of the private sector in disaster risk management was also discussed, and it was suggested that to bring them on board, it was necessary to recognize, recruit and respect them.

**DRAFT OUTCOMES:** Alain Wong, Mauritius, moderated the session and began by inviting statements from Major Groups. Local Authorities emphasized that cities can collaborate more strongly around issues of urban resilience, knowledge exchange, best practices and innovative solutions and that DRR policies should change in line with changing disasters. Civil Society called for: developing approaches to engender behavioral change targeting all groups; civil society organizations to work closely with governments and parliamentarians to support DRR implementation; and civil society organizations and governments to collaborate on ecosystem management for DRR.

Women emphasized the role of women in ecosystem-based DRR and said gender concerns in DRR continue to be overlooked due to limited national budgets. She called for: disaggregated data on age and gender; investment in community resilience; and strengthening accountability mechanisms. Children and Youth said African youth are committed to playing an active role in implementing the Sendai Framework and called for: developing youth-sensitive policy frameworks; identifying risk factors; and providing youth more leadership opportunities in disaster risk management (DRM). Media underscored the crucial role of media in promoting DRR policies, disseminating early warning messages and holding governments accountable for commitments. Science and Technology called for increasing investment in human capacity and skills for DRM at local, subnational, regional and continental levels.



**Africa Programme of Action (PoA):** Khemraj Servansingh, Chair of the Drafting Committee, outlined the terms of reference of the Committee and the contents of the draft PoA for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa on Thursday. Wong then opened the floor for comments on the PoA.

In the ensuing discussion, one participant reflected on the need to add context by including in the document the current problems facing Africa. Kenya questioned if indicators would be developed for the five Africa-specific targets included in the PoA. Ghana noted that the Asian region has instituted a regional disaster preparedness center, and suggested an African center be established as an output of the PoA. He also suggested updating the 2004 African Regional Strategy noting the regional context has changed. Burkina Faso and Uganda underscored the importance of referencing the management of ecosystems in the PoA. UN-Habitat and Save the Children underscored the need to focus on urban DRR.

Concluding, Wong noted the Drafting Committee would revise the PoA based on the interventions.

**Declaration:** Khemraj Servansingh presented the draft declaration of the Fifth High-Level Meeting on DRR. Participants proposed minor changes and additions, which Servansingh said would be incorporated.

**Africa Position for the Global Platform 2017:** Servansingh highlighted that the African position for the 2017 Global Platform in May 2017 will be based on the outcomes of Sixth Africa Regional Platform, and noted the proposal that the Africa Working Group on DRR be mandated to develop Africa's position.

## WORKING SESSIONS

**INTEGRATING DRR AND HEALTH:** This session convened on Wednesday afternoon and provided an opportunity for participants to review the application of the health component of the Sendai Framework in Africa.

Fatimata Dia Sow, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), moderated the session. John Rogers, Sierra Leone, said the Ebola outbreak was both a disaster and an opportunity because it illuminated the need to mobilize resources beyond the health sector and to coordinate with those involved in DRM. He described positive changes including: more national simulation exercises; increased ministerial coordination; risk monitoring for Ebola survivors; and improved health facilities in border areas.

Nsenga Nygoy, World Health Organization, said health should be integrated in all DRR policies and plans at the country level, but underscored that integration without implementation is not enough. Less than 40% of African countries include health in their disaster risk assessments, he said, a fact that underscores a lack of leadership and capacity.

Erick Ventura, International Organization for Migration, said that in light of the current "century of mobility" where one in seven people is a migrant, there is a need for capacity building, better service delivery and cross-border coordination. The mass movement of people, he said, includes particularly vulnerable groups such as women and young children.

Gary Jones, Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), highlighted the importance of civil society and said there is much to learn from listening to the most vulnerable people occupying the margins of society who are also the most resilient. He said results of health research must be converted into knowledge for practical use, and that DRR can help inform that science.

In the ensuing discussion, participants commented on: the need for further integration of the health sector; the role of traditional healers; and Mali's multi-risk plan.

**ONE UN FOR DRR:** This working session, chaired by Robert Glasser, SRSO, convened on Thursday and provided a space to reflect on the successes and lessons learnt in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sendai Framework. Glasser, in his introductory remarks, underscored the importance of the UN coordination on DRR. He highlighted that the Sendai Framework called on the UN to support implementation in a coordinated manner, and highlighted that the UN Chief Executives Board recently agreed to the UN Plan of Action on DRR for Resilience.

Solomon Munyua, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD), explained that ICPALD worked with members to agree seven DRR priorities, and then members borrowed \$660 million from development banks to invest in these priority areas. Munyua outlined the resilience analysis unit established to track resilience progress, and that results so far indicate improvements.

Najat Rochdi, UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) Cameroon, outlined challenges faced by Cameroon including overflowing of rivers, and the impacts of conflicts in Nigeria and the Central African Republic, causing massive migration. She stressed that it is the governments' role to solve problems and the UN's role to provide support. Rochdi described the efforts of UN agencies operating in Cameroon to coordinate activities and share data. She said this data is shared with Cameroon ministries monthly in a user-friendly dashboard, and has become essential for disaster planning and decision making in Cameroon.

Drawing on Mauritius and Seychelles as examples, Simon Springett, UNRC, Mauritius and Seychelles, said the two countries demonstrate how a focus on strong partnerships and high impact programme support works. He highlighted the development of the first storm surge early warning system in Africa, located in Mauritius, and emphasized that 'delivering as one' goes beyond the UN and requires government leadership and policy guidance. Highlighting the role of climate finance for both countries, he noted that official development assistance is declining and so access to a variety of grant based financing is vital.

During the ensuing discussion participants discussed: the importance of respecting local competencies; impact of gender norms on vulnerability; politicization of data; and the need to bring expertise together.

**MONITORING THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK:** This working session convened on Thursday and was moderated by Marc Gordon, UNISDR, who welcomed the large number of national DRR focal points present. He said that in Africa, there

is rapidly growing interest and commitment to understanding and managing risk, which has given rise to a large repository of information on disaster risk at the national level. He presented a potential monitoring system for the Sendai Framework, noting that it intends to use globally comparable indicators as the core of national monitoring. He discussed data disaggregation as a way to improve opportunities for credible conversations with local constituents. He described the inclusion of Sendai indicators within the 2030 Agenda, as a “game changer” regarding collection and standardization of disaster-related statistics, which was not possible under the HFA.

Patrick Kangwa, Zambia, talked about Zambia’s experience with monitoring and implementation under both the HFA and Sendai Framework, noting that under the HFA, Zambia was not using all of the available tools for day-to-day disaster management and mitigation. Zambia changed course and took ownership over development of the Sendai Framework, he said, engaging the highest level of political leaders. He discussed the importance of linkages among indicators at the national level, the SDGs and under the Sendai Framework itself.

Discussion ensued on: UNISDR support for RECs to better explain the indicators and targets; incorporating national standards at the international level; the implications of damage and loss for indicators; monitoring timelines; lines of reporting; minimum data standards; the need for proper translation of reports; the distinction between indicators and objectives; and UNISDR support for simulation exercises.

Gordon discussed the work remaining to ensure that data collected at the micro level feeds systematically into monitoring and reporting. He noted the disparity between countries, some of which have rich data environments while others have yet to be developed. He underscored that the primary reporting responsibility lies with states, not RECs. Kangwa responded that member states should have ownership over the process, from the collection of data to the development of indicators. He said that certainly states will need technical support and funds, but that country focal points should set out to convince their governments to lead the process. He called the Sendai Framework a great opportunity to move from reactivity to proactivity.

### **SPECIAL EVENT**

**WORLD TSUNAMI AWARENESS DAY:** Robert Glasser moderated this special event, opening by noting that Africa has 26,000 kilometers of coastline and many low-lying islands. Tsunamis, he said, are somewhat rarer than other disasters but they command global attention, and thus World Tsunami Awareness Day, 5 November, is an opportunity to raise awareness for DRR.

Akiko Yamanaka, Special Ambassador for World Tsunami Awareness Day, Japan, gave a detailed history of the toll that tsunamis have taken on human life and livelihoods. Participants watched a video on tsunami preparedness efforts in Japan, following which Yamanaka referenced a Japanese saying: “be prepared, and you’ll have no regrets.” She called for Japan to work closely with African colleagues for a more peaceful and stable world.

Alain Wong, Mauritius, shared experience gained during a recent tsunami simulation exercise involving 24 Indian Ocean rim countries. Drills like this, he said, are crucial to reduce tsunami risk by testing contingency plans and involving all sectors of society in preparedness and response.

Prem Goolaup, Mauritius, said although Mauritius is low risk for tsunamis, the island has experienced inundation of coastal areas, particularly after the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. He explained that since then, Mauritius has undertaken an aggressive education and awareness campaign in schools, community centers and women’s associations, as well as carrying out simulation exercises in schools.

Jean-Baptiste Routier, Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), explained that the IOC has developed tsunami contingency plans in each country, and also funds training and equipment. He underscored the need to develop action plans linked to civil populations.

Regina Prosper, Seychelles, outlined Seychelles’ national contingency plan for tourism. She explained that all tourism-related businesses in the Seychelles are required under the Disaster Risk Management Act, to have plans and also conduct tsunami training evacuations. Prosper mentioned that practice drills are useful to highlight flaws and gaps in evacuation systems.

Yamanaka underscored the three main factors in disaster preparedness: learning resilience; education for disaster prevention; and related legislation.

The ensuing discussion centered on: overcoming social and religious barriers to community participation; the lack of early warning systems in West Africa; and preparing for unlikely extreme events. The roles of inter-religious committees and education for overcoming barriers were highlighted. Science-based awareness raising was proposed by one participant. On preparing for extreme events, a participant opined that it was a matter of “preparing for something that you pray will never happen.” Another emphasized that simulation exercises are crucial, and that preparedness is linked to improved quality of life.

### **CLOSING**

Patrick Kangwa, SADC, expressed appreciation to the Government of Mauritius and hoped that the outcomes of the meeting would go a long way in addressing DRR.

Expressing thanks and reflecting on the meeting, Robert Glasser observed that it was a remarkable achievement that given the unique nature of hazards in Africa, diversity and culture, people were able to come together and agree on reducing disaster risk.

Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, AUC, noted that the meeting presented an opportunity to review the programme of work for the implementation of the African strategy for DRR in line with the Sendai Framework.

Wong thanked everyone for their valuable contribution and closed the meeting at 6:50pm.

## REPORT OF THE 5TH HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON DRR

### OPENING CEREMONY

On Friday morning, Khemraj Servansingh, Director General, National DRR and Management Center, Mauritius, welcomed delegates, explaining that the 6th Platform had been successful in aligning Africa's priorities with the Sendai Framework.

David Douglas van Rooyen, Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South Africa, framed his comments in light of the ongoing El Niño induced drought affecting millions of people across Africa, saying that DRR is high on the regional agenda. He expressed hope that delegates would: adopt the Africa PoA for DRR aligned with the Sendai Framework; adopt a ministerial declaration and recommendations on implementation of the Africa PoA; and endorse a draft African position for the 2017 Global Platform on DRR convening in 2017.

Robert Glasser said Africa experiences two major disasters each week and that there is no way to continue emergency response on such a scale, particularly in the face of climate change. Drought, he said, can be alleviated through increasing storage capacity and drought-resistance crops. He called national disaster loss databases an essential tool that must be embedded in the work of national statistics offices. He lauded the incorporation of Sendai Framework indicators within the SDGs.

Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, AUC, focused her comments on climate change and described the AUC's work collaborating with RECs and regional climate centers to manage disasters, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability.

Xavier-Luc Duval, Acting Prime Minister, Mauritius, welcomed delegates to the island underscoring its unique vulnerability to disasters such as flash floods, storm surges and cyclones. No country is immune to disaster, he said, but Africans are at particularly high risk. He highlighted his country's efforts to mainstream DRR through legislation, regular simulations, a national DRR council and local DRR committees. In closing he quoted Benjamin Franklin: "by failing to prepare you are preparing to fail," and urged delegates to commit to the Mauritius Declaration. He then declared the High-Level Meeting formally open.



A view of the room during the ministerial segment

### ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Mariatou Yap, Cameroon and Chair of the last High-Level Meeting, presented the bureau members for the high-level meeting on DRR: Mauritius, representing East Africa, was elected Chair of the Bureau; Cameroon, representing Central Africa was elected Rapporteur; Liberia, representing West Africa, was elected first Vice President; Botswana, representing southern Africa was elected second Vice President; and Tunisia representing North Africa was elected third Vice President.

Participants adopted the agenda for the meeting.

### STATEMENTS OF AU MINISTERS/AFRICAN MINISTERS

Ministers and high-level representatives delivered national statements on Friday morning.

Algeria highlighted new partnerships between state institutions and the scientific community to address disaster risk. Bukina Faso spoke of the economic impact of disasters on primary production sectors including agriculture. Cameroon drew attention to adoption of the Yaoundé Declaration in 2015, on the implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa. Highlighting strategies and mechanisms to reduce risk, Comoros explained that development has been hampered by cyclones, floods and storm surges.

Republic of Congo drew attention to an emergency response plan and called for support for their national strategy for DRR. The Democratic Republic of the Congo explained how networks for communications, parliamentarians and women had been set up to address disaster risk. Egypt outlined efforts to formulate indicators for DRR and engagement with Arab states and African countries to strengthen capacity to respond to disasters.

Ethiopia said steps to address disaster risk in his country are being guided by global, regional and sub-regional frameworks. Gabon highlighted a national contingency plan for DRR developed in line with the Sendai Framework. The Gambia expressed concern over the inadequate funding for the implementation of the Sendai Framework at the regional and national levels. Kenya expressed commitment to the implementation of the Sendai Framework drawing attention to a national platform in the Office of the President.

Lesotho stressed the need for government leadership and elevating DRR to the highest level of decision making. Mali outlined national initiatives including a parliamentary network for DRR, a national DRR plan, and the inclusion of DRR in school curricula. Mozambique highlighted two key DRR reforms in her country: the revision of the DRR master plan to align with the Sendai Framework and SDGs; and the establishment of a DRR fund. South Africa urged delegates to upscale national DRR strategies and to focus on cross-border issues. Tunisia discussed a data bank collection institute linked to climate change and natural disasters in his country.

Zambia urged mainstreaming DRR into all development sectors for sustainable development. Senegal endorsed conclusions of the Platform and said governments can now take "bold measures" within the objectives set up by the international community. Zimbabwe highlighted his country's plans to: integrate DRR into the education system; set up enabling environments; and formulate a new climate change policy and response strategy.



Burundi called for improved coordination at the regional level including through a legal framework for DRR. Liberia highlighted progress installing new meteorological and hydrological stations and called for attention to the Zika virus.

Madagascar explained that DRR activities are being undertaken in 22 regions of the country and that Madagascar is an active member of the IOC, calling for more consideration to island states. Malawi outlined its experiences with flooding events, resulting in internally displaced peoples, and its efforts to develop community disaster risk maps, to mitigate impacts of future events.

Rwanda explained it has incorporated DRR into its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, and established disaster committees at all administrative levels. Explaining that 4.8 million people in South Sudan are food insecure, South Sudan described collaborative efforts with the World Food Programme, to establish an EWS. Sudan described its work with regional organizations and looked forward to further technical and financial support.

Tanzania said it has enacted a disaster act and expressed willingness to join international resilience efforts. Describing the establishment of an emergency operations center, Uganda said it has 400 military officers on standby to serve as first responders to disasters. Togo outlined its system of coastal protection and efforts to improve community resilience. Guinea described its plans to establish a specialized national disaster agency and operations center.

#### **UPDATE REPORT: REGIONAL INITIATIVES**

The EAC highlighted significant progress in strengthening DRR capacity in the region including through the DRR Act 2015 and a climate vulnerability impact assessment study. Discussing challenges, he noted that partners are at different level of DRR legislation development, which complicates the harmonization process. On other constraints, he cited limited budget allocations, outdated disaster maps and the absence of a harmonized mechanism to address transboundary disasters.

ECOWAS highlighted a DRR action plan for 2010-2015 and efforts to strengthen knowledge, risk identification, data sharing, and guidance for national platforms. He noted that a regional center for disaster reduction and DRM is being established as well as a new plan of action for 2015-2030 in line with the Sendai Framework. On challenges, he mentioned inadequate funding and integrating the SDGs in disaster risk strategies and plans.

IGAD outlined efforts to enhance the functionality of several regional institutions and support to member states to align legislation, programmes and strategies to the Sendai Framework, including through the development of guidelines. He said challenges include lack of resources and delayed action in responding to early warning systems, which is critical to DRR.

Emphasizing the vital relationship between ecosystems and DRR, IUCN called on African states to recognize the role of ecosystem based DRR for implementing the Sendai Framework in Africa. He further called for strengthening the level of investment in and promotion of ecosystem based DRR through the inclusion of natural infrastructure and natural capital in national DRR plans.

#### **POA, AFRICA POSITION AND DECLARATION**

**PoA:** Khemraj Servansingh, Mauritius, as the Chair of the Drafting Committee of the Africa Regional Platform, summarized the draft outcome document for delegates. Alain Wong, Mauritius, led delegates in a page-by-page review of the draft outcome document for comments, and delegates adopted the PoA for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 in Africa, without amendment.

**Final PoA:** The PoA includes: outcome, goal and objectives; guiding principles; targets; priorities for action; means of implementation; monitoring and reporting; and an annexed matrix of priority activities.

The PoA reaffirms the seven global targets of the Sendai Framework and recommends that African countries develop data by 2020 to measure progress in achieving the following additional targets by 2030:

- Substantially increase the number of countries with DRR in their educational systems at all levels, as both stand-alone curriculum and integrated into different curricula;
- Increase integration of DRR in regional and national sustainable development, and climate change adaptation frameworks, mechanisms and processes;
- Substantially expand the scope and increase the number of sources for domestic financing in DRR;
- Increase the number of countries with, and periodically testing, risk-informed preparedness plans, and response, and post-disaster recovery and reconstruction mechanisms; and
- Substantially increase the number of regional networks or partnerships for knowledge management and capacity development including specialized regional centers and networks.

**MINISTERIAL DECLARATION:** The rapporteur presented the Declaration of the Fifth High Level Meeting on DRR followed by an opportunity for comments. Discussion ensued whether to recommend national budgetary commitments to DRR. Delegates agreed to remove reference to further committing 2% of national budgets on DRR, and instead agreed to “further recommend to significantly increase the allocation of annual national budget for DRR.” With this change Ministers adopted the Declaration by acclamation.

**Final Declaration:** In the final declaration, Ministers and Heads of Delegation endorse the PoA for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 in Africa and call on African states and key stakeholders to align strategies and programmes with the Sendai Framework.

Ministers also:

- Recommend significantly increasing the allocation of annual national budgets for DRR and call upon African States to strengthen the monitoring of DRR guided by the Expert Working Group on Indicators and Terminology relating to DRR.
- Call upon UNISDR to continue providing institutional and policy support for implementation, follow-up and review of DRR in Africa with the AUC and regional economic communities; and request the UN and other international and regional organizations and international and regional financial institutions to incorporate DRR measures in development

assistance programmes. Ministers request financial institutions to consider the priorities of the PoA when providing financial and technical support for integrated approaches to DRR

- Reiterate the need for the AU to continue strengthening institutional and political commitment to DRR; and
- Mandate the Africa Working Group on DRR to coordinate the development of the Africa Position to be presented at the 2017 Global Platform for DRR to be held in May 2017.

### CLOSING

David Douglas van Rooyen, Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South Africa and Deputy Chairperson of SADC, expressed satisfaction that the PoA aligns with the Sendai Framework, and will be considered by the AU Summit in January 2017. He said DRR is now receiving the attention it deserves and urged delegates to continue this commitment to ensure effective implementation of the PoA.

Rhoda Peace Tumusiime highlighted the adoption of the Mauritius Declaration as a key achievement and expressed commitment of the African Union Commission in ensuring its implementation.

Robert Glasser praised participants for their “remarkable accomplishments,” likening Ministers to generals constantly “anticipating a surprise attack,” which he described as a huge responsibility.

Mauricio Escanero, Ambassador of Mexico, conveyed greetings from the President of Mexico, and highlighted Mexico’s longstanding experience in dealing with disasters. He looked forward to seeing African delegates in Cancun in May 2017.

Wong congratulated delegates and noted the PoA outlines clear goals and objectives. He clarified that the African position for Cancun will be developed post-conference by the African Working Group, under the leadership of the AUC.

He underscored the need for African countries to redouble efforts and translate shared commitment into concrete and sustained actions, and looked forward to seeing delegates in Cancun. He closed the meeting at 5:35pm.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

#### Second High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership:

This meeting will convene under the theme “Towards Inclusive and Accelerated Implementation of the 2030 Agenda.” **dates:** 28 November to 1 December 2016 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** <http://www.hlm2nairobi.go.ke>

**CBD COP 13:** The thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 13), including the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP/MOP 8), and the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (COP/ MOP 2), will be held concurrently. **dates:** 4-17 December 2016 **location:** Cancun, Mexico **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int) **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/>

**2017 Global Forum for Food and Agriculture:** Organized by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Germany, this Forum focuses on central questions concerning the future of the global agri-food industry. The 2017 theme is “Agriculture and Water: Key to Feeding the World.” **dates:** 19-21 January 2017 **location:** Berlin, Germany **contact:** GFFA Secretariat **email:** [info@gffa-berlin.de](mailto:info@gffa-berlin.de) **www:** [www.gffa-berlin.de](http://www.gffa-berlin.de)

**28<sup>th</sup> Africa Union Summit:** The 28<sup>th</sup> Africa Union Summit will take place in January 2017, location to be determined. **dates:** January 2017 **location:** TBD **contact:** AUC Secretariat **phone:** +251-11-551-7700 **fax:** +251- 11-551-7844 **email:** [chairperson@africa-union.org](mailto:chairperson@africa-union.org) **www:** <http://www.au.int/en/commission>

**Fifth Session of the Regional Platform for DRR in the Americas:** The Fifth Session of the Regional Platform for DRR in the Americas will be held from 7-9 March 2017 in Montreal, Canada. The Platform, hosted by Canada in cooperation with UNISDR, aims to discuss how government, civil society, private sector, academia and media can drive implementation and measurement of the expected outcomes of the Sendai Framework. **dates:** 7-9 March 2017 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** UNISDR Secretariat **phone:** +41-2291-78908 **fax:** +41 22 91 78964 **www:** <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/events/46627>

**2017 Global Platform for DRR:** This meeting will take place in Cancun, Mexico. **dates:** 22-26 May 2017 **location:** Cancun, Mexico **contact:** Connie Brown **phone:** +41 22 91 78908 **fax:** +41 22 91 78964 **email:** [globalplatform@un.org](mailto:globalplatform@un.org) **www:** <http://www.unisdr.org/conferences/2017/globalplatform/en>

For additional upcoming events, see: <http://sdg.iisd.org/events/calendar/>

### GLOSSARY

AUC	African Union Commission
DRM	disaster risk management
DRR	disaster risk reduction
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
ICPALD	IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
LAS	League of Arab States
OCHA	Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs
PoA	Programme of Action
SADC	Southern African Development Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SRSR	Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction